

Singing Life's Songs

By Sheila Johnson

When I was a young girl, my Daddy used to take me to the Opera House in El Paso. Now that I am older and realize the cost of the theater, I don't know how he ever afforded those tickets on Porter's wages. Going to the theater with Daddy was one of the highlights of my childhood. We would both dress in our Sunday's best and my mother allowed me to wear low-heeled patent leather shoes. What a treat! I don't remember ever falling asleep during any of the musical performances—but I do remember Daddy carrying me out of the theater and laying me down on the back seat after the show (this was before seat belts were required). I loved and still love to sing in the shower and anywhere outside of the shower using my very high soprano voice. My mother shared the success stories of Marian Anderson with me, giving me hope for a singing career. I was able to attend one of her performances with my Daddy also!

To say that I have a favorite song, would not be telling the truth. I truly love most genres of music, and I can identify with almost all of the lyrics. For instance, in the musical *Annie*, "It's a Hard Knock Life" paired with the lyrics, *Tomorrow, Tomorrow, I love you Tomorrow, you're only a day away ...* seem to sum up my optimistic outlook on life. Oh, and the Disney classics such as *The Jungle Book*, *Tarzan*, *Moana*, *Finding Nemo*, and a host of others are some of the most magical lyrics and tunes that top my chart when it comes to creativity!

But life has produced some its own songs that cannot be forgotten. Songs that use chords of dissonance have planted themselves in the linings of our broken hearts and taught us to sing out loud for peace. Songs whose lyrics were written with words from the battlefields of war and life have given our voices instructions for harmony. Melodies that were made from the hardships of orphaned children give us cause to sing about community. When all is well with the world, and we manage to steal a glimpse of God's grace upon God's people, our souls sing in many tongues. The cries of newborn babies combined with sighs of awe produce a symphony of love.

When it seems like the world is too much to bear, these are the songs I love to sing. When it seems like good things will never be the same again, these are songs I love to sing. And at the end of the day when the sun sinks behind the horizon, and darkness descends upon the earth, these are the songs I like to sing into my slumber.